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Addressing Gaps and Growing Demands amid Pandemic, Mayor Fulop Mobilizes and Expands Innovative Approaches for Vulnerable Homeless Residents

Jersey City Implementing Cutting-edge Technology to Modernize Public Health Strategies for Most Needy

JERSEY CITY - **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)** are announcing innovative, mobile sanitation and hygiene solutions to expand support services for at-risk homeless residents who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. To meet the growing demand for municipal services and address gaps in critical health services amid the pandemic, Jersey City is launching two new Health Buses to expand outreach efforts significantly.

The buses include two full shower and bathroom units, two laundry machines, a medical consult room, and free wireless Internet access. The buses will be deployed along a regularly scheduled route and address acute spikes in homeless or emergency management scenarios.

“Our homeless are at special risk and special concern,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “As we’ve already found with the public showers and the free testing we’re offering, by mobilizing our efforts directly to targeted areas and populations, we’re making our city services more accessible and therefore more utilized by those who need it most.”

The Health Buses are being purchased and retrofitted with mobile sanitation and hygiene units, benefitting from a \$50,000 grant from Reckitt-Benckiser, a multinational company that produces health and hygiene products. The Health Buses will provide access points for health services, including sanitary needs, health screenings, testing, education, and counseling. The initiative is also a way to engage and connect people to additional resources to maintain and improve health.

“The buses will be multifunction, designed specifically with the homeless community in mind. We will now be able to deploy multiple health services simultaneously throughout the city to boost clientele and encourage more people to utilize the critical health services we offer,” added **HHS Director Stacey Flanagan**. “Since homes are the answer to homelessness, the Health Buses will also coordinate with homeless and housing agencies to help people move in the direction of readiness for housing.”

The city’s progressive efforts targeting community health services are part of a broader initiative in creating an all-encompassing, healthier community for all. The World Economic Forum chose Jersey City to launch and pilot the Healthy Cities and Communities global multi-city platform. Making history, Jersey City is the first in the world to pilot and implement global applications through the Forum’s unique partnership with innovative

companies. Jersey City is one of only five cities worldwide selected to engage in the rare partnership with WEF and serve as an international model for its partner cities in Austin, Mumbai, and Moscow.

One such innovative effort apart from the Health Buses is the Journal Square public showers facility, which has become a Mobile Hygiene Support location for Jersey City's homeless. Since the pandemic, the steadily increasing need for hygiene and sanitation support is being met by HHS with expanded hours of operation, now seven days a week.

The Journal Square location has also provided city staff the chance to build important relationships with the homeless and supply useful support. At the site, HHS provides clients with hot showers, to-go meals, personal hygiene products, PPE, and access to the myriad of additional health services Jersey City has to offer. HHS has also begun offering free flu shots and rapid response COVID-19 testing to the homeless at the Journal Square site.

Due to the successful rollout of the initial Mobile Hygiene Support pilot, the city has extended operating hours of the Journal Square public showers to seven days a week as follows:

Monday through Wednesday
7 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Thursday & Friday
7 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Weekends
7 a.m. - 11 a.m.



“We’re mobilizing our efforts to make sure everyone has access to critical health services, especially our neediest residents. With these buses, Jersey City joins a small group of forward-thinking cities by bringing critical public health services on a mobile platform,” concluded Mayor Fulop.

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Wallace-Scalcione at KWallace@jcnj.org. ////